MR. CRIBBINS: We had two kinds of intra-theater air transport at that time. We had about 125 Douglas-built C-47s which we called "gooney birds" that were operating on a scheduled basis from Melbourne, Australia with stop over points that were critical to the theater and within range of the gooney birds. The C-47 carried 5,000 pounds of cargo, 21 people or a combination thereof. I forget its exact range, but it was not very far by today's standards. Therefore, we had a lot of way stations along its route which eventually led to the Philippines. This scheduled air transport carried critical cargo such as medical supplies or anything else that could fit within the confines of a relatively small aircraft with limited capabilities in both cube and weight. In addition, the theater had some 600 Fairchild C-46s which carried just about twice the amount of cargo and had a larger body. The C-46s belonged to the Air Corps. The "gooney birds," and this is interesting, belonged to the Air Traffic Command, which was a predecessor of the Military Airlift command. The Fairchild birds belonged to the theater, but they were under the Air Corps which, of course, became the Air Force. It was interesting that General MacArthur's headquarters had absolute control of the scheduled airlines. We

designated where it went, what the schedules were and what the priorities were. The 600 C-46s were under the command of General Kinney, who was the commander of the theater Air Force. We could call upon those birds on a case-by-case basis to support an operation. There were only two modes of transportation in the theater. It was either sea or air or you didn't get there.

INTERVIEWER: What role did the Army element play in controlling what was being moved?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, interestingly, the reason I wound up in the Transportation Regulating Office was the fact that it was run by a bunch of cavalrymen. At the head was Colonel Unger, his deputy Colonel Whipple, and Colonel Culp, who was third in line were all cavalrymen. So to answer your question, this scheduled airline was run by a bunch of cavalrymen with action officers who were conscripts from the commercial airlines. They were really the base of knowledge except for the chief for whom I worked. He was a Colonel Troutman, a Regular Army engineer, who had been with General MacArthur's headquarters from the time that it was established down in Brisbane.

INTERVIEWER: General MacArthur is considered one of our great captains. It must have been exciting working on his staff. Did you get to see much of him?

MR CRIBBINS: I didn't see that much of him, but I did meet him towards the end of my tour. But let me come back to that later. I'd like to say something else first. On 20 October 1944, General MacArthur landed in Leyte in the Philippines. He literally landed there and you will see pictures of him walking ashore with General Romulo of the Philippine Army. But anyway he walked ashore knee deep in water in his usual attire with the first half of one of the outfits that landed at a place called Tacloban. That really was General MacArthur's return to the Philippines. I am sure you remember his claim when he left there that "I shall return." At that time an essential element of his headquarters was moved into Tacloban and immediately set up a forward echelon. I remained back in Finschhafen with a colonel from the Transportation Regulating Office. I was the one person in the Air Transport element because the other two people who had air transport experience had moved with the forward element. I guess it was a week or two after they had moved forward when we received a flash message from

General Kreuger, Commander of Eighth Army. The message said that he was on Ormoc which was the western side of Leyte and that the First Cavalry Division was about to make an amphibious assault on a very critical place. The message went on to say that he had the absolute necessity to have amphibious equipment immediately to get his jeeps, 3/4 ton and whatever else he had ashore to successfully execute this amphibious landing. We were just preparing to move the rest of General MacArthur's headquarters forward so when this flash message came in I immediately looked for the colonel and couldn't find him. In fact, I couldn't find anyone. It seems that everyone had vanished except for the adjutant general who really had no idea of what was needed. Here I was a first lieutenant who knew nothing about air transport, but knew something about amphibious operations and ground combat and had to make a choice of what to do. We had just secured the loan of eight C-54s (a four engine plane which later became a DC-4 commercial airplane) from the European Theater. They were on loan for the Philippine operation to move General MacArthur's headquarters and to provide logistic support. Its capability exceeded that of aircraft we had in the theater. I believe there were four or five of these birds loaded and waiting to take

off with General MacArthur's remaining staff elements. I couldn't find anyone who was in a position to make a determination as to what should be done. So I guess figuring I didn't have much of a career in the Army anyway and knowing that General Kreuger really needed the equipment badly, I off loaded General MacArthur's headquarters. Later that night I went down to the air strip and helped them load all of this amphibious equipment on the aircraft and left General MacArthur's staff sitting back at Finschhafen. I guess the decision must have been all right because I never received a reprimand for it. I didn't get any accolades either, but General Kreuger did send a note of thanks stating that he did get his amphibious equipment and was able to conduct the operation. I often thought afterwards that if I had been a Regular Army officer with a career in front of me, I might have given it a second thought. As it was, I just did what I thought needed doing. Well, you had asked me a question that I didn't answer.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, did you ever get to see General MacArthur when you worked in his headquarters?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. I actually saw him twice. He was an unusual soldier, officer, general and gentleman in many ways. One thing was true, he manned the theater with a handful of people that were close to him. The first time I saw him occurred between the dropping of the first and second atomic bomb. I do believe that he did not know when the first atomic bomb was dropped. Project Manhattan was kept that much of a secret. When he gave a speech to the people assembled in the headquarters in Manila, he told us about the atomic bomb and what it meant. His delivery was very warm and eloquent, and he really came over as a much warmer person than I had believed him to be. I was walking down the steps at the Manila Post Office one morning when I saw him a second time. I looked and there he was coming up the steps. He stopped and I stopped, stood at attention and saluted him. He then came up and stood on the same step with me. I guess my greatest surprise ever was that I was just about 5'10" and so was General MacArthur. General DeGaulle was about 6'6" and certainly all the pictures I had seen would indicate that General MacArthur was just as tall. At any rate, he stopped, said, "Good morning, Captain." I said, "Good morning, sir." Then he said, "Things are looking brighter. How long have you been here?" I

told him that I had been a combat arms officer and had transferred to his headquarters about a year earlier. We must have talked, I guess, four or five minutes, very informally. Finally he said, "Well, good morning, Captain. Hope to get you home soon." I said, "Yes, sir, thank you." I ran down the steps, went to my office and told my boss, "Truck, I want orders home." He said, "What's wrong with you? Have you gone psycho on me?" I said, "Truck, I have seen him and I have talked to him." He said, "I have been in this headquarters since it was formed in Brisbane. I have never seen him or talked to him." He said, "I'll make out your orders right away." (laughter).

INTERVIEWER: I take it you really enjoyed working for Colonel Troutman. What type of officer was he?

MR CRIBBINS: He was the senior fellow in air transport in General MacArthur's headquarters. Truck was a great guy despite the fact that he was not an air transporter. He was a good manager and soldier. A Regular Army Engineer officer. He entered the Army in about 1936 or 1937. He was a full colonel when I worked for him. While in Australia, he joined MacArthur's headquarters. Truck told a wonderful story

about being up in Western Australia as an engineer where he was largely responsible for putting in air strips. I believe that was one of the reasons he had gotten into the air transport business. As the story goes, he was riding in a jeep with a couple of Aussies and were going over this bumpy hardpan and a big red kangaroo jumped up. Kangaroos just don't hop over big obstacles, they skip and jump all over the landscape. So Truck casually pulled out his .45 and shot the kangaroo right between the ears with one bullet. As Truck says, he instantly became "Dead Eye Dick" in the fashion of the Western Aussies. That reputation followed him all through Australia. The things that he made sure of, he never again carried a .45 nor shot a kangaroo again. Truck was a great guy. I really enjoyed working with and for him. I lost track of him after the war, but he stayed on and went into Japan with General MacArthur's headquarters.

INTERVIEWER I take it then that you did not go on to Japan with the headquarters.

MR CRIBBINS: No. By the time the second atomic bomb had been dropped, having served as a combat arms officer and with over three years on the theater staff,

I had enough points accumulated to come home. I had not intended to stay in the Army. I took the opportunity of shipping out to the states with a Navy lieutenant, a lieutenant commander, an Army major and an Air Force field grade officer. We got on a TU-2 tanker that was going back home through the Panama Canal. Since we had command of the sea transport out of General MacArthur's headquarters, we took advantage and shipped out of the Philippines on that tanker spending 36 days at sea before landing in Galveston, Texas.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, did you serve on General MacArthur's staff until the end of the war?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. I served on General MacArthur's staff until the end of the war. Shortly after sending the amphibious equipment to General Kreuger, we got a message for me to go up to Leyte in Philippines. There was a Navy commander, who I had to replace because he was medically evacuated. I assumed his duties and remained in the Transportation Regulating Office for the duration of the war.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other significant lessons learned that you would like to share with me?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. A couple of things I believe Mr. Manchester's book about General MacArthur has brought to the forefront. That man just did not believe that a Japanese ever lived that could kill him. I think that he was probably as close to being fearless as any person could be. I believe that he proved it in World War I and certainly in World War II. In fact, I will tell you a story. General MacArthur would go up to the roof with his corncob pipe and watch the Kamikaze attacks and sometimes he would take his surgeon with him. General MacArthur's surgeon was a huge man who weighed about 250 pounds. One morning he came down and told my boss, "Truck" Troutman, "You know, Troutman, that man thinks he has a halo. I just hope that halo is big enough for me, too." I believe that the Japanese had come to the belief that General MacArthur was truly an immortal person and they dedicated themselves to finding a way to kill him. At that time I believe that they felt that if they could kill General MacArthur, they could stave off our offensive campaigns. For instance, we set up a public address (PA) system so General MacArthur could broadcast from

the bridge of a cruiser before landing on Mindoro. When the landing was made, this was the last stop before going into Luzon, which would bring General MacArthur back to the Philippines. We set the PA system up and for whatever reason at the last minute, General MacArthur didn't go. A Kamikaze plane struck the bridge of that cruiser killing a British Lieutenant General who was the British senior officer in General MacArthur's headquarters. I think an admiral who was in charge of the task force and several others who were on the bridge were killed. But General MacArthur wasn't there. I think the Japanese and some of us began to think that maybe he did have something going for him. After the war the Japanese, in my estimation, really held General MacArthur in high esteem.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you had made captain while you were assigned to General MacArthur's headquarters. Were you still in the cavalry at the time?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh, yes. I retained the cavalry insignia even though I was on the J-staff. I finished the war wearing the cavalry insignia because we did not wear General Staff insignia as we would now. I made captain

in December 1944 and there is a story that goes along with that. I was in Tulosa on Leyte not long after I made captain and in walked a lieutenant of the WAACS. She said her name was Helen Whitbeck and that she had to get to the Philippines immediately or the war was going to come to a screeching halt. I asked her what priority she had. She said she had a priority two which was a high priority and that she had come up from New Guinea and Biak and was enroute to Manila where she was going to become cable censor for the theater. Well, I took a good look at her and I raised her air priority from a two to a four. [End Tape C-209, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-209, Side 2]

MR CRIBBINS: I told her there was considerable difficulty getting into Manila. As a matter of fact, there was because we were operating a B-25 courier which landed on MacArthur Boulevard since we really didn't control the air strip at Nichols Field in Manila in those days. The Japanese also controlled most of the city. I invited Helen to dinner in General MacArthur's mess and it was probably the best dinner she had had since she had hit the theater. At the same

time, I bought a bottle of gin from Captain Bill Smith, my Aussie roommate because I thought it would be nice to have a drink before dinner. I had not had a drink, I guess, in three years. At any rate, we went down to a beautiful beach in Tulosa, where Bill and I had a tent. She took one look at this Aussie and myself and said, "Sorry, but I do not drink." We did have dinner and I got to see Helen several times during the two weeks that she remained in Tulosa before she left for Manila. Of course, I subsequently saw her in Manila. We waited until we got home before we were married in February 1946. Next February it will be 42 wonderful years of marriage for us.

INTERVIEWER: Congratulations. Now let's talk about what you were looking forward to doing once you got back to the United States.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, when I came back, I guess my first thought was probably to go back into the horse business except for one thing. I do believe the Army showed me something that I think it has shown many young people. That is, I realized that I had a capability which I don't believe ever would have come out if I remained with horses. Maybe it would have, but at any rate, it

certainly wouldn't have come out as quickly as it did. I found out that I could do things other than be a horseman. I found out that there was a world other than horses, horses and horses. I really think that when I came home, I gave very serious consideration to doing something other than what I was doing when I went into the Army which was running a stable and riding horses 365 days a year. However, it was taken out of my hands while I was getting out of the service at Ft. Dix where I was being evaluated for amoebic dysentery and whatever else that had happened to me during the war. I did get a clean bill of health. While I was doing all those things, I was staying with some friends in Red Bank, New Jersey. About 10 o'clock one night, I received a phone call from Leigh Parker, who was then Vice President of Traffic for Delta Airlines. He said, "Captain Cribbins I'm Leigh Parker and I'm Vice President of Traffic for Delta Airlines." He went on to say, "You came home with Oscar Bergstrom who is a special assistant to the President of Delta." Oscar was the Army major I spoke of earlier who was one of our station people in Manila. Leigh Parker said, "Oscar tells me -- and he stopped and said -- "Captain Cribbins, I'm going to level with you. We are going into Chicago. We haven't been in the territory North

of the Mason-Dixon Line and we need someone who knows air transport. We really need a damn Yankee and according to Oscar you qualify on all counts. Are you interested?" I said, "Well, I certainly would be interested in talking to you." I said, "I'll be getting out of the service and I'm on terminal leave now." So I arranged to go down to Delta and I signed with them in December 1945. I went to work after the holidays and spent a month down in Atlanta, Georgia with Delta where they taught me how to speak southern. Then they sent me up to Chicago where I became their traffic representative. In those days Delta was a very small airline, but that was before they joined with Chicago Southern to become the large outfit that they are today.

INTERVIEWER: Were you still holding your Reserve commission? Did you have a commitment of any type that required you to report to active duty for training?

MR CRIBBINS: No. I was walking out of the hospital when I was cleared physically and told that I was then out of the Army. I was about to walk out when an officer, I forget his rank, stopped me and said, "Captain Cribbins, I looked over your record and it is

a very good one. Frankly, do you want to come back into the Army if we have another war? Do you want to come back as a Private?" I said, "Heck no." Well, he said, "May I suggest that you sign out with a Reserve commission." He didn't give me all the specifics,but it appeared that since I was a captain, that it would be prudent if I signed a Reserve commission. There was absolutely no commitment. I was inactive Reserve and I never put on a uniform until I was called back to active duty.

INTERVIEWER: You were working with Delta after the war and then you moved on to Nevada. What caused you to return to your first love?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, two things, I guess. One of them was the fact that Chicago did not recognize people who couldn't vote in Chicago. Veterans of World War II who were not natives of Chicago did not get preference on housing, so I was living in a place called Fox Lake which took about two and one-half hours commuting each way. One morning Helen came in when I was shaving and said, "Honey, do you love me?" We had been married less than a year at the time and I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Honey, it is 2 o'clock in the

morning." We were getting up at 4 or 4:30 AM in order to get down to the Loop for me to go to work at 9:00 A.M. and I said, "Honey, I think we have had enough of this." But let me tell you something logistics-wise about Delta because this is important. One of the jobs I had was advertising Delta around town, that is, talking to people who would be interested. We were also starting the personal credit cards for the airlines. My job was to promote them, Delta and especially air transport across the board. That was the job and I guess I was fairly well suited for it by that time. But at any rate, I walked into the Chicago Mail Order House and talked to the traffic manager. Chicago Mail Order House was a catalog house that was competitive with Sears Roebuck, which was Chicago based, or Montgomery Ward, which was Baltimore-based. Both Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward had depots in the southeastern United States. If someone ordered from a Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog, they got about 48 hours service from any one of those depots. Chicago Mail Order House didn't have the wherewithal to place that sort of a facility in the southeast. However, they were very interested in competing. By the time they got a catalog request and sent it by parcel post, train or whatever means they were just not competitive.

There was no such thing as Federal Express in those days. The traffic manager and I talked about this. I went back to Delta and asked what kind of an arrangement we could make and guarantee the fast air transport service between Chicago and our hubs in the southeast, consisting of Atlanta, Savannah, New Orleans and Jackson, Mississippi. I drew up a memorandum of agreement or a contract with the Chicago Mail Order House. Without benefit of a depot in the southeast, the Chicago Mail Order House became competitive with Sears and Montgomery Ward. Now it is interesting looking back, and I have said this before when I have been out speaking, that we talk today as if the idea of using an air lines of communication to preclude the necessity of having inventories at several locations where needed is a great idea. This was 1946, some 41 years ago and Delta Airlines, through air transport, was able to make Chicago Mail Order House competitive with Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward in southeastern United States without benefit of having a forward depot.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get a promotion as a result of your actions?

MR CRIBBINS: No. After the early morning incident I told you about, I talked to Helen and said, "I have had to spend five and one-half years in the Army, you've spent three, this seems to be a heck of a way to make a living." It was an attractive sort of business because of all the young college graduates. I was one of the exceptions since I was not a college graduate. The pay wasn't all that great, but the future of the airlines looked good. However, we decided to call it quits. In December 1946, I told Delta that I had enjoyed working for them, but that I didn't intend to make a career in the airline business. Secondly, I had been offered a job as a station manager for a radio station in Boise, Idaho. So Helen and I packed up and since we had no family or anything to worry about, we moved west. Helen originally came from Minneapolis, but had lived in New York and Reno, Nevada before the war. She really liked the west and that's where we headed.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go to Boise or to Reno?

MR CRIBBINS: I was suppose to go to Boise, Idaho to this radio station, but Helen took me by Reno first. I must say, I fell in love with that part of the world, but particularly Reno. I found that there were some

good looking horses out there. After having been in Boise, I thought that Reno was more affordable, so off to Reno we went. What I really did was get back into the horse business. I thought that I could train horses and send them back east and sell them to the eastern market as hunters, jumpers, show horses and even race horses. We brought a very small place -- I called it the only farm west of the Mississippi. It was about seven acres and just six miles south of Reno. We had irrigation rights, and found some good looking horses, started working them and sent them back east. That was my career at the beginning of 1947.

INTERVIEWER: You were in Reno when the trumpets of war sounded again and it was off to Korea. What do you remember about your recall to active duty?

MR CRIBBINS: I was in Reno and I realized one thing that I was badly deficient in was a college education. So while I was working with horses I enrolled in the University of Nevada's Department of Agriculture. When I was a youngster I had always hoped to become a veterinarian. Well, I recognized that that wasn't in the cards, but I had a pretty good animal husbandry background with horses and other animals so I went on

to major in animal husbandry. I helped to establish a Nevada Horse Show Association and became its first president. I guess I was training about four or five horses getting them ready to send. I took 20 credits at the University of Nevada in the Animal Husbandry Department. After the first semester, I taught a horse course for three credit hours for juniors, seniors and grad students. The purpose of the course being to convince these people that putting a quart of oats into a good horse that could potentially be worth money, and use them on the ranch, was better than putting a quart of oats in a horse that had no potential. So I was teaching breeds and breeding, feeds and feeding and it was very interesting. I was able to write my own books. I was taking 20 credits, teaching three, running a ranch, establishing the Nevada Horse Show Association, putting on horse shows and having a ball. It was a wonderful way to live. Then the Korean War came along in June '50. I thought that since I was now 36 years old and as a former combat infantryman turning the wrong side of the 30s by age that I would not be recalled. You see by this time, the Air Corps had parted from the Army. In 1947 they sent me a letter and asked if I was interested in joining the Air Force since I had an Air Transport MOS.

I said no, because I really wasn't interested in coming back in the service. So in May 1951 nearly a year after the war was declared, I was recalled back to active duty with 30 days to report down to Camp Roberts, California. I got an extension of 30 days to finish the class I was teaching so that the students could get credit for that class. The University helped me get that 30 day deferment. On 5 July 1951 I reported to Camp Roberts as a combat infantryman.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go directly to the theater of war from Camp Roberts?

MR CRIBBINS: No. While I was in Camp Roberts a friend from Nevada was with me. He was recalled to the Pentagon as mobilization designee. This friend was one of the original army aviators. His name was Bryce Wilson. Bryce came back to the Pentagon and he knew I had this Air Force MOS and he knew the Army was building up its own aviation business. So he took action here in the Pentagon to have me transferred from the Cavalry to the Transportation Corps. That happened about two months after I arrived at Camp Roberts and I was transferred up to Travis Air Force Base, where I became Department of the Army Air Traffic Control

Officer between August 1951 and January 1952. I was then sent to Fort Eustis for an orientation on the Transportation Corps. In February of '52, I received orders to the Far East. Now I was in the Transportation Corps with an Air Force MOS.

INTERVIEWER: The Transportation Corps then, I guess, was about 10 years old, and you had been working in this business off and on for about eight years.

MR CRIBBINS: Yes, it was two years old. When I first became a transporter in General MacArthur's headquarters, it was just two years old. The Transportation Corps this summer celebrated its 45th Birthday. That means it was formed in 1942. I had become a transporter even though I had a cavalry commission in October '44 so I have now been a transporter for 43 out of the 45 years of the Transportation Corps' existence.

INTERVIEWER: You reported to Korea, I believe, in '52. Where were you assigned and what were your duties, sir?

MR CRIBBINS: My assignment was in Eighth Army with the 45th Movements Control Group at Taegu. The Army had

given up responsibility for air terminals so we were not in the air transport business by that time. The Air Force was running all of that. At any rate, I stayed, if I remember, no more than a couple of months with this outfit in Taegu when I was transferred to Eighth Army Headquarters in the Movements Control Division. In the Movements Control Division, I was responsible for air transport operations. Even though we were not running the air terminals, we were responsible for supporting the Army with all the things that came in and were shipped to the theater by air transport. Eighth Army was splitting up and leaving what became a Theater Support Command. The Theater Support Command remained in the rear, that is at Taegu, while Eighth Army moved forward to Seoul since we were still fighting a war. I remained back at Taegu as the liaison officer for Eighth Army for transportation and then I was made Chief of Movements Control Division even though I was only a captain. But I had had J-staff experience and probably more staff experience than anyone else in the headquarters. So I became Chief of the Movements Control Division or I guess the official title was probably Deputy Chief of Movements Control Division since I was only a captain. They allowed me to get whomever I needed and I was in charge

of Movements Control from around June-July 1952 until I left Korea and went to Japan in March or April 1953.

INTERVIEWER: Recognizing the importance of air transportation, how critical was it to the sustainment effort?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh, very much so. We moved a lot of things. We were not only responsible for the air transport priorities, but also for doing those things that ensured we got all we needed from Japan, Taiwan or intra-theater. C-134s had come along and were able to haul large amounts of cargo. It too was the beginning of Army aviation where they were using light helicopters which were mostly medical evac birds. So air transport was really coming into its own in the Korean War, especially since Army aviation was raising its head. Our principal means of movement in Korea was by rail. We had the 712th Battalion of the New York Central and the 724th of the old Pennsylvania Railroad. These railroads were run by people who had run railroads in civilian life and who had been recalled as mobilization designees as a unit to support the war. We moved the supplies from Pusan and other southern ports in South Korea to points north. We were

responsible for the priorities and for seeing that the rail operations supported the allied efforts by moving things forward as well as retrograding things. At any rate, one time we kept 60 flat cars loaded with selected types of ammunition in Pusan ready for haul forward so that we did not lose any time once word came that we had to move them. I am sorry to say that a lot of the retrograding included human remains. Another job was to control the movement of ships into the ports in South Korea and that included ships off Inchon, and the POL terminal, which was off shore in Inchon. Inchon had the highest tide of any place except the Bay of Fundy. We had a little ship, Czmavi that was it. It could fit into a basin and at high tide you would put it in this basin. It was like a dry dock with water in it and you would close the gates on that basin and keep the water at a certain level. You could only put the ship in and take it out when the tide was up. The tide could drop 25 or 30 feet at Inchon and obviously it was a heck of a tough thing, but the beauty of it was being able to get supplies and whatever were critically needed up North without having to ship them in-land from Pusan up through the peninsula to Seoul through the combat zone.

INTERVIEWER: When we look back at the Korean War, we were fighting the war in an undeveloped country. You mentioned the fact that we brought our trained people over to handle the railroads. What did we do to train the Koreans in handling some of the transportation responsibilities?

MR CRIBBINS: The Koreans were basically knowledgeable in maintaining track and some of the old equipment. When I went there, we still had steam engines that were converted to electric while I was in charge of the Movements Control Division. The Japanese apparently had never let the Koreans hold executive or management positions when they occupied Korea. The Koreans were used whenever possible, but all of the management was done by Americans.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall what type of workload you had during that time?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. We would get up at 4:30 or 5 o'clock in the morning and quit at 10 o'clock at night. Often we worked through most of the night and I would say a routine day was 6 o'clock in the morning till 9 or 10 o'clock at night.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any significant problems getting the right things to the right places to fulfill combat service support requirements such as ammunition, fuel, etc.?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh inevitably having to get the right things where required was tough. I said the logistic problems of World War II in the Pacific within a combat unit were minuscule. Logistic problems in Korea were horrendous especially problems with ammunition. Our consummation rates were out of sight because that was the one way you could avoid having to fight hand-to-hand with the North Koreans or the Chinese. It was a real lesson to learn that when fighting people who appear to have little regard for human life the one thing that you needed more than anything was massive firepower. Of course they, in turn, to the degree they could, used massive firepower. So all artillery was really important to avoid having hand-to-hand battles which resulted in large scale casualties, but did not result in either side gaining much ground.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, after you were assigned to Headquarters Eighth Army, you moved on to US Army

Forces Far East in Japan. What duties did you perform in that assignment?

MR CRIBBINS: In Japan, I had the Air Transport Branch in the Office of the Director of Transportation for the U.S. Army Forces Far East, headed by Brigadier General Sam Browning. I was in charge of the Air Transport Branch even though I was still a captain. The Air Transport Branch was the movements control element for air transportation within the Movements Control Division. In other words the division was broken out into air, sea and rail and I supervised the air part.

INTERVIEWER: How many folks did you have working for you? Evidently you were in a job that a lieutenant colonel or a major might hold.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, probably so. At Movements Control Division in Korea I guess I had 10 or 12 people, but four or five in Japan.

INTERVIEWER: I guess you remained in Japan until what about 1954. Where did you move on to after that, sir?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I remained there until June of '54. I came home earlier than intended because Helen got Yokohama asthma and she just couldn't survive in Japan. Since I had had a tour in Korea and a year plus in Japan, I moved out in June 1954. I was then assigned to Brookley Air Force Base in Mobile, Alabama as a Department of the Army Air Traffic Control Officer.

INTERVIEWER: What could you have possibly been doing in that part of the country as an Army officer?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I was the only Army officer at Brookley Air Force Base at the time. I was responsible for moving Army traffic into South America, North Africa and Spain from all the channels flowing into Brookley Air Force Base which was a part of the Military Airlift Command. Although it was operated by the Air Force, there were Army and Navy representatives to assist the Air Force.

INTERVIEWER: Was there very much business going into North Africa or South America?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes, a lot of business, but there was not a heck of a lot to do as the Air Traffic Control

Officer. In fact my predecessor, I think, spent his career down there playing golf. I, as a matter of fact, became so bored that when the Navy decided that it didn't warrant having a full time person there, I volunteered and the transportation office that I worked for over in Gravely Point, agreed. I then became the Navy Air Traffic Control Officer. The Navy was establishing a system called Quick Trans which was an airlift operation around the United States between the Navy repair facilities and the Navy depots in the United States to provide air transport. The Air Force had what they called LOG-AIR. Both of them are still operating. In fact, I have been wondering why the devil the Army doesn't take advantage of this. I helped draw up the contract with the Navy which operates all around the United States with commercial carriers on charter to move high priority cargo between the Navy repair facilities and depots. It was a very effective and efficient operation for making sure you didn't get depot lines stoppers or you had NORS (Non-Operational Ready Supply now called Non-Mission Capable Supply) items that you needed to move.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I guess we use the ALOC or air lines communication for our overseas shipments, but I see your point in using it within CONUS.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, we really weren't using ALOC then.

INTERVIEWER: Yes sir, but I believe we started in the'70s.

MR CRIBBINS: I think Wayne Smith was the guy who was doing most of that in the '70s. This was back, don't forget, in 1954, that is 33 years ago.

INTERVIEWER: I agree with you. The Army has now capitalized on this concept for overseas. I didn't mean to imply that we were doing ALOC in those days.

MR CRIBBINS: We still, I don't think, have capitalized on the capability today of doing this sort of thing between depots except that the National Guard does it with their Caribous. They operate 13 Caribous among the various Aviation Classification and Repair Activities at Groton, Connecticut, Springfield, Missouri, Gulf Port, Mississippi, Fresno, California and their other entities in National Guard aviation.

But the Army has really been slow on doing this and I never will understand why we didn't recognize the great potential earlier of moving high priority cargo by air over long distances.

INTERVIEWER: I agree with you that there is a great benefit for using ALOC. As I said, I don't think the AMC Community has capitalized on it at this point in time. You eventually wound up in Germany. How did you manage to land an assignment there after spending most of your Army life in the Pacific?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I came up to Washington on a trip to see my rating officer. It was pretty nice to be in Mobile, Alabama while your rating officer was in Washington. I stopped in at personnel over at Gravely Point where the Transportation Corps had its offices as a special staff entity when we had the technical services. The young man, I think it was Major or Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Miles, said, "I've looked at your record and it is a very good one. You are a Reserve officer and we have not done this before. You are also over age in grade pretty badly. How would you like to go to Transportation Corps Advanced Course?" I was no youngster when I came in to begin with. I had

been out for five or six years. I said, "That sounds wonderful. I don't really have enough to do where I am and I would really like that." So I got orders and I was assigned to TOAC 9 (Transportation Officers Advance Course Number 9) in 1955. I reported to Fort Eustis for a one year course. I was one of the very first of the reservists to attend and it took two waivers for me to do so. One was for being a Reserve officer because I couldn't qualify to become a Regular and the other was for being too old.

INTERVIEWER: How well did you do in that course?

MR CRIBBINS: It may sound self-serving, but I finished number one.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm sure that you were able to teach as well as learn.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I had a great advantage and I really mean this. I didn't go to college until I was 37. I managed a stable, had been in business on my own, served on a Joint Staff in World War II, had been on two staffs in Eighth Army in Korea and on the U.S. Army Far East Staff in Japan. I had gone to college

between 1949 and 1951, so I was just short of graduating from the University of Nevada. I had been a part time instructor there so I was very high on the learning curve. In other words, I still had a lot going for me the other students in the class didn't have. Many of them had been out of school for 20 years. I had been out of school for a very short period of time when I began the advance course. So I would say without qualification that I worked at it, I'll grant you that, but even so I think I had a leg-up on my classmates.

INTERVIEWER: Yes sir.

[End Tape C-209, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-217, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, in 1956, you got your first assignment to Europe. At that time, we still had the technical services in the Army. As a Transportation Corps (TC) Officer, how did you manage to land in the largest ordnance depot in Europe?

MR. CRIBBINS: This was truly a transportation assignment to begin with. The Mannheim Ordnance Depot had about 110,000 short tons of secondary items and spare parts. It was the largest ordnance depot in Europe. Some of the inventory was from World War II. For whatever reason, it appeared that they never had a Transportation Corps Officer. Yet they were getting as many as 75 to 100 boxcars a day in and out of that depot. My assignment was to be the transportation officer. I was a major when I arrived and was welcomed with open arms by the Ordnance Corps. I was given a small staff and if I remember correctly, I had a young Captain Dillon. I lost track of him since, but I had a very good master sergeant and some German local nationals and we established a transportation office. That job lasted from 1956 into 1957 until we received a new depot commander. Colonel Henry Ray Jordan, Ordnance Corps, came on board having served in World War II and with a solid background in the Ordnance Corps' depot operations. He was looking for an assistant for supply operations (ASO) which was the key job in the Ordnance Depot. As it turned out, it appeared to him that I was qualified to take that job. Accordingly, he made me the ex officio, ASO, of the largest ordnance depot in Europe. In other words, I

was the ASO because the Ordnance Corps officer who came in for the assignment became the deputy depot commander. This meant that I not only had the Transportation Operation, but had some 1800 local nationals working in supply, maintenance and storage now known as COSIS(care of supplies in storage), then known as maintenance in storage (MIS) of the ordnance spare and repair parts. It was probably one of the most rewarding assignments that I have ever had. The Mannheim Ordnance Depot in those days had both stock and supply control. In other words, they were really an inventory control center along with being a depot. It was equipped with some of the first generation IBM machines. We responded to requisitions and requirements from Ordnance Corps units throughout the theater. This assignment lasted from either late 1956 or early 1957 until the spring of 1958 at which time I was assigned to France. I went on to become a part of the Inventory Control Center that belonged to the Transportation Corps down in Olivet, France. Before I get to that, let me recount briefly what happened to the Mannheim Ordnance Depot. At the time that I was assigned there, we received word that the depot was going to be phased out. The purpose being to move all of those logistic facilities west of the Rhine.

Mannheim Ordnance Depot was in a particularly vulnerable spot. The thrust was to move everything into France. The biggest single job that we had during my tenure was to begin phasing down the depot and moving the operation into France. This was a major undertaking since we did have some 110,000 tons of spare and repair parts. Also, the supply control or what became an Inventory Control Center down at Olivet was moved before the parts were moved. My assignment was interesting in many, many ways. I was the odd ball Transportation Corps Officer in the sense that the rest of the officers at the depot were in the Ordnance Corps with the exception of the young captain that I had with me. Yet, I must say, I was treated as one of the family. It was professionally, as well as personally, rewarding and probably one of the best assignments I could have ever wished for.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let's back up a minute. How did you get the 110,000 short tons of secondary items moved to France or had you transferred to the Transportation Corps Supply Agency before the equipment was moved from Mannheim?

MR. CRIBBINS: We had largely moved the depot by the time I had left. As a matter of fact, I think that I would have had difficulty leaving the Mannheim Ordnance Depot if we weren't phasing down and out. Although, Colonel Jordan had become a good friend as well as a colleague, and my boss, I do believe he was not about to break up the team that we had in the Mannheim Ordnance Depot until most of the operation had been moved. That was phasing out the parts, getting the supply control effort transferred into France, moving those parts that were not in excess and were needed by lower echelon units in Germany backhauled down to the two installations in France. If I remember correctly, primarily, Braconne which was at that time the largest ordnance depot in France and just on the upswing as we retrograded out of Germany into France. A couple of times I thought that I might be reassigned because of the phase down of the depot, but Colonel Jordan retained me as Transportation Officer and Assistant for Supply Operations. I must say that I enjoyed it.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, talk a bit about your assignment with the supply control agency for the Transportation Corps in France. You mentioned that the ICC, (Inventory Control Center), for the Mannheim Depot was

moving into France. Were those activities then colocated or were they separated?

MR. CRIBBINS: The inventory control elements of the Technical Services were colocated at a place called Olivet outside of Orleans, France. That is right at the head of the Loire Valley. It was actually a compound of inventory control centers for each technical service, one of which belonged to the Transportation Corps. The reasons I happened to get assigned to France may have been twofold; my experience in the Mannheim Ordnance Depot that was being phased out and the fact that I was about half way through a normal three year tour. A colleague and friend of mine, Lieutenant Colonel Howard (Howie) Schiltz, later Major General Schiltz, was in the 37th Transportation Group and lived on the compound with us. While I was assigned to Mannheim, Howie asked me if I would like to have an interesting assignment in France. He was going to France to become Deputy Transportation Corps Officer at the COMMZ at Orleans. I said, "Yes, I would be interested." Little did I know how quickly that would work because within the week, I had orders and was wrapping up what I was doing in Mannheim and heading for France on a split tour. It wasn't all that easy

because we had arrived in Germany without any household goods other than personal property. There were no provisions for any household goods in France so we were faced with going on the economy and buying enough things to furnish an apartment or one of those small duplexes that we were moving into in France. It was a burden on the pocketbook I must say. In the spring of 1958, Helen and I left for Olivet staying for about two weeks in a hotel in Orleans until we got settled in and I went to work at the Inventory Control Center. I was initially the Deputy Commander of the Inventory Control Center (ICC) when I arrived.

INTERVIEWER: As the deputy commander sir, what were your primary responsibilities?

MR. CRIBBINS: I guess, in looking at it, I was brought in with the idea that I was going to become the commander. I think that was the general thrust of bringing me into France. The Commander was a lieutenant colonel who was about ready to retire, but did not retire while I was there. I supported him fully and I remained as the deputy commander, but I guess I was pretty much Mr. Inside. In other words, I was the fellow who was principally responsible for

running ICC and the ICC commander was in substance the overall commander who was Mr. Outside. HE WAS A VERY ABLE OFFICER AND I would certainly say that I enjoyed working with him. It was a difficult position because I do believe that the transportation corps officer to whom the Inventory Control Center reported, really wanted me to take over. I was flatly unwilling to make any move toward replacing the lieutenant colonel for whom I was working.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, could you talk a little bit about command and control. Who did you work for and how did the ICC operate?

MR. CRIBBINS: The Inventory Control Center was actually what would now be considered a command element. It reported to the Transportation Corps Officer who was on the COMMZ staff reporting to General O'Neil. Our organization was fairly large. We had IBM keypunch card machines. We managed all the transportation corps materiel in the theater. The chain of command would have been the Commander of the Inventory Control Center, to the Transportation Corps Officer, to the Commander of COMMZ who was a two star

general. The COMMZ was responsible for all CSS operations in the theater.

INTERVIEWER: You did quite well at that job because I understand you were then rewarded with selection and then attendance at the General Command Staff College.

MR. CRIBBINS: Let me talk a little bit more about what happened in the ICC because I think it was an exciting operation. When I arrived, we were responsible for supporting the Transportation Corps' marine fleet down at LaRochelle, the rail system and equipment and all highway equipment. In other words, we managed all the transportation corps materiel. The Inventory Control Center for Army Aviation, however, when I arrived in France, was still at Coleman Barracks. In those days, it housed an offshore aviation depot maintenance facility with an ICC. After I arrived in France, I was told that our major objective was to merge the Inventory Control Center for aviation with the Transportation Corps ICC in France. That was no easy task because this was in 1958 and for six to seven years, that Inventory Control Center had been firmly established at Coleman Barracks which was outside of Mannheim. Unlike the Ordnance Corps, the

Transportation Corps had but one facility although there was some activity at Pirmasens. The facility at Coleman Barracks provided the primary support for Army aviation throughout the theater. The job was a tough one to tackle. In tackling this, we looked very critically at how we would go about doing it. I remember so well that Colonel Burt Miles, the COMMZ Transportation officer, was evidently getting pressure to get on with it. We were trying to figure out just how we were going to turn off the ICC in Germany and bring it into France overnight without having any way station as it were. For example, on the Mannheim Ordnance Depot move, there was an operational facility in France that had the capability for picking up all of the materiel management functions so it was a relatively easy phase over. Whereas, the ICC in France for the Transportation Corps was picking up a brand new account of considerable magnitude and practically doing this overnight. As a result of the necessity of getting this moved in accordance with the theater plan, we were given a drop dead date of early in the spring of 1959, that we would assume all the responsibilities for the Transportation Corps Aviation Program in Europe. Trying to hire enough qualified people was tough. The ones who were capable could not speak

English and there just wasn't a market for the kinds of people that we needed to run an Inventory Control Center. Accordingly, I asked for carte blanche approval to secure 50 soldiers with a high aptitude for the kind of work that needed to be done. I was given the go ahead to do this. I brought these 50 young men on board. To train them, we arranged for them to use cards that had been used previously for actual requisition flow for our inventory control and management. In essence, they practiced all the things that an ICC would do under normal conditions. We used those cards just as if they were the real thing. Here was an interesting exercise that I often thought about afterwards. It could have been a sheer disaster. On the other hand it probably wasn't the greatest success in the world either. The young men processed requisitions, issued MROs, detailed inventory control and management, brought in receipts, issued items and kept control of the inventory for about two weeks. At the bewitching hour one night, the pumpkin became Cinderella. Without saying a word to them, we put the real cards into the system. I was afraid that if I had told them that they were going for broke on that given night, we would have had a worse problem than we did. The next morning, they were working with live cards and

we managed to survive. I wouldn't say that it was the best operation that I had ever been involved with, but it worked. However, it was not the sheer disaster that we thought it might be.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back then and talk about the aviation support. Did the aviation folks have their own stove pipe within the Transportation Corps?

MR. CRIBBINS: Aviation was entirely separated at Coleman Barracks from all the other commodities in the Transportation Corps. When we brought the aviation account down, that was the first time that aviation had actually been melted with the other Transportation Corps inventory control in the theater. Here we had a case of taking an entirely separate account as if it were a different branch of service and bringing it into the Transportation Corps.

INTERVIEWER: If I recall, the Air Force had a role to play in depot maintenance operations for Army aviation up to about 1961.

MR. CRIBBINS: Oh yes, very much so. For example, at the major air terminal in France and I am trying to

think of the name of it now, we had an element from Coleman Barracks assigned. Their job was to interface with the Air Force. You see, until 1961 or there abouts, the Air Force had complete control of research development, procurement, acquisition and depot maintenance of Army aviation. Such being the case, we were really challenged by having to interface the Army with the Air Force's depot maintenance system. That was quite a significant problem in itself in addition to speaking the same language.

INTERVIEWER: What type of aircraft was in the aviation fleet in Europe at that time?

MR. CRIBBINS: Interestingly, and I think I have some background papers that go back to 1960 on some of these--our fleet of aircraft at that time was about half fixed-wing and half helicopters. The fixed wing being primarily "01" or what we called in those days "L-19s" or "Bird Dogs" and "U-6" "Beavers" which were the single engine fixed wing as well as Otters, which were the larger fixed wing aircraft. For helicopters, we had CH-34s which were Sikorsky transports and we had OH-13s which were Bell and some OH-23s. I forget whether or not we had OH-23s there at that time, but

they were in the inventory and were Fairchild-built. I guess maybe we still had some H-19s in the theater, but we didn't have any H-21s in the theater. The H-21s, called the "Flying Banana", were in the Pacific.

INTERVIEWER: You not only had a problem transferring the aviation functions down to France, but there must have been problems associated with the Air Force trying to keep the fleet operational.

MR. CRIBBINS: I think the Air Force did well by us. It was well established with Wright-Patterson AFB being the principal center of activity for support. The Air Force, as I remember back in those days, had the Air Force Systems Command which brought aircraft into the inventory and then Wright-Patterson would pick up the fielding of the aircraft. I think that the Air Force had several air materiel areas. The air materiel areas were really MSCs (Major Subordinate Commands) of the Air Force Logistics Command. For the Army, we had the Transportation Materiel Command in St. Louis. It had moved there in the late '50s from Middletown, Pennsylvania. It was initially established as being the Army's interface with the Air Force. In fact, at major Air Force installations, we had an Army member

who acted as the liaison with the US Air Force. I know that we had one at each major installation where depot maintenance work was done on Army aircraft.

INTERVIEWER: Was this your first direct association with Army aviation in a management or a command and control role.

MR. CRIBBINS: I would say sort of. I was really pretty closely involved with Army aviation in my assignment in US Army Forces Far East in Japan after the close of the Korean War. That was probably my initiation into Army aviation. During the Korean assignment, I was pretty closely related to, but not responsible for Army aviation. In 1952, Army aviation was transferred to the Transportation Corps. I guess as a Transportation Corps Officer, and being in the air transport business, I was not directly involved in Army aviation to the degree that I became later. I was certainly involved to the degree that I was one of the few people who had had air transport experience. I was one of only two people that were recalled by the Army in 1951 who had an Air Force MOS when there wasn't such an MOS in the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Your Korean War experience then was a precursor to your direct involvement with Army aviation during your assignment to the European Theater.

MR. CRIBBINS: Another interesting thing is this. For whatever reason, there were not very many Army aviators who were directly involved in Army aviation materiel management. In fact, right into the '60s when I came into the Pentagon, a large number of officers who had never flown an aircraft were the materiel managers for Army aviation. That also included people at the top level because neither General Bunker nor General Besson were rated. In substance, the logisticians took over the materiel management of Army aviation regardless of whether they had experience flying an aircraft. I happened to be one of them.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I want to come back to that point a little bit later because you are not an aviator, but you have done rather well in the aviation logistics business. I want to come back to this point because I think that fact does have merit when we discuss the current vision for our log system. However, you are still in France and are making a concerted effort to bring the aviation folks down and make them a part of